


VC's Corner

It is my pleasure to acknowledge our achievements in the past decade and the recognition of Unmas as a technology-based university. The recent award of the Multimedia Status Certification further highlights our role in supporting and catalyzing the ICT adoption by the State Government, industries and the community at large.

Our ICT intervention programmes into rural communities have won both National and International acclaim, namely through the E-Bario Project. Unimas will continue to establish its leadership in the area of rural ICT.

E-learning will be exploited fully to supplement and enhance teaching learning in the University. More than 230 courses throughout the University have online presence. A set of criteria is being designed to assess the merits of these courses. With the proposed development of a full-fledged E-learning system together with an integrated library system, we hope to establish Unimas as leader in providing technology-based education.

As a forward looking university, we have to take advantage of the latest technology to deliver better services. It is our aim to provide adequate network and computing resources to enhance administration, teaching-learning and R&D activities. In line with this we have recently migrated to a Gigabit Ethernet and also upgraded our Internet link to 4Mbps. Policies and guidelines are being formulated to better manage ICT resources in the university. The co-operation of all staff members are required to ensure that network resources are harnessed to the fullest.

Vice Chancellor

Highlights

Focus on Network Infrastructure

The Unimas backbone network has now been upgraded to a one gigabit bits per second (1 Gbps) network capacity. The process of upgrading started in February 2003 and was completed by the end of June, 2003. During this period, Unimas also faced a phenomenal number of attacks of new forms of worms/viruses/trojans. The challenges of managing limited resources was made worse due to bandwidth hungry Peer-to-Peer applications such as Kazaa dan Gnutella. Prior to the upgrade, network flooding affected all users, as our network was not layered. The upgrades also dealt with the replacement of equipments damaged by lightning strikes. To date the following work have been completed:

1. Restructuring the entire Network System setup from a **FLAT structure** to one with several **Virtual LANs (VLANs)**. This has enhanced inter-communication security and helped confine malicious traffic to a smaller group of users, within their own VLAN.
2. The capability of the backbone has been upgraded from 100Mbps to 1Gbps and the inter-building connection has been upgraded from 10 Mbps to 100 Mbps.
3. Attacks of network worms such as the OPASERV, slammer, Mydoom have been kept under control.
4. A Firewall system has been installed and activated at the external Router.
5. An Enterprise Antivirus solution was purchased and installed at various levels: Server, desktops and e-Mail systems.
6. A dual-leased line to the Internet via **JARING** and **TMNET** has been setup, providing a total bandwidth of 4Mbps.

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The quality of services has improved as highlighted in the table below:

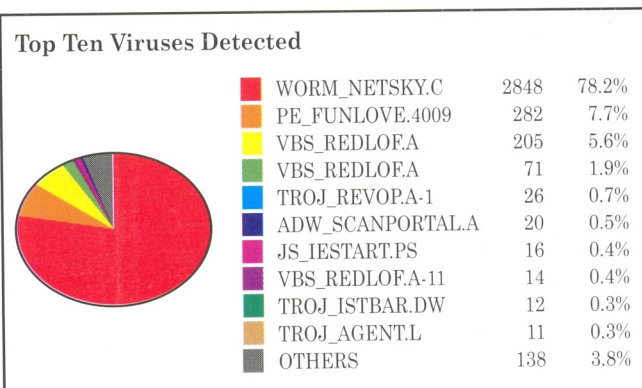
Nature of Problems	Before July 2003	After July 2003 till now
Broadcasting Problem (Storming)	94%	5 – 10 %
Collision	High (20 – 30%)	Low – 5%
Stability (Shutting down router or rebooting)	2-5 times a day	None

Based on the analysis of the Internet traffic to Unimas between **May 1 to May 12 2004**, it was found that:

1. Most of the downloads were for official purposes which included Windows updates and the updating of mirror sites.
2. Google and Yahoo were the most popular search engines used.
3. Utusan Malaysia Online was the most popular online newspaper read.
4. Chatting using Yahoo Messenger is high (77589 hits, 28955Kbytes).
5. Friendster.com was high on the access list with 14,594 hits. Friendster is an online community that connects people via chat.
6. Downloads from entertainment site (playease.com) for WarcraftIII occupied almost 1% of total data transferred:

7. There were 27,943 hits to: "download.games.yahoo.com".

Below are the top ten viruses affecting users in Unimas between **May 1 to May 12, 2004**.



Computer worms and viruses are still available in Unimas despite the antivirus systems protection and measures taken to control the virus proliferation activities. The contributing factors are:

- i) Patches to the Windows Operating Systems not updated periodically on users' PCs.
- ii) Infected e-Mails attachment.
- iii) The use of non-supported antivirus solutions.

CICTS UPDATES

Application Systems

Integrated Financial Accounting System (IFAS) has been running live since January, 2004. The new version of IFAS running on PeopleSoft version 8, is fully Web enabled. The Human Resource Management System (HRMS) is also being upgraded to PeopleSoft version 8. The system is expected to run live latest by September, 2004.

CICTS upgraded Lotus Notes to version 6 last year, which has now overcome many email problems. Further upgrades are being planned this year to add many more new features for both developers and users. Separate sessions will be organized for various groups of users to familiarize them to the new features in the new version. Besides that, new applications such as overtime allowances and an extended HelpDesk application are being developed.

In 2003, web-enabled Modules of Student Information System (SIS), were introduced. This facilitated the student enrolment process during the first Semester of 2003/2004. A similar enrolment system was also built for Centre for Graduate Studies. The following modules have been implemented in 2003:

Research Programmes

- Intake Application and Enrolment
- Registration
- Sponsorship
- Monitoring
- Examination and Evaluation

By Course Programmes

- Intake Application and Enrolment
- Registration
- Course Registration
- Examination and Evaluation

Common Modules

- Students Information
- Statistics and Records

An online registration and enquiry system was developed for graduating students in August last year. Other plans include query facilities via *infoakademik* (a joint venture project with Telekom), online (web-based) query facilities for prospective students to check their status of application, Transcripts and Graduation Module and the online registration facility for National Service Training Programme.

Other Services

Technical Support

The distribution of new PCs under the IT Procurement exercise for the year 2003 has been completed. In the last exercise priorities were given to new staff and also staff returning from their study leave. A total of 245 units of PCs were distributed to the various Centres of Responsibility accordingly. There were 82 units of PCs distributed as replacements for old and aging units purchased in 1999.

In order to improve the effectiveness of our Technical Support Services, Support personnels trained in first level troubleshooting and technical support have been assigned and placed in each centre.



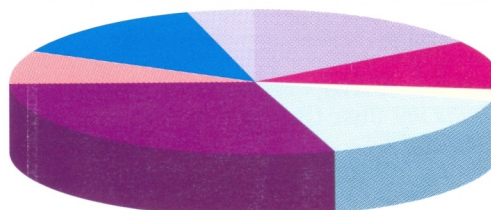
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E-Learning

In the first quarter of the year, CALM has hosted over 90 courses online through its four dedicated E-Learning servers, and the bulk of these courses are created and managed by lecturers from the Faculty of Resource Science and Technology (FRST). Below is the breakdown of active courses which are currently available on the E-Learning servers.

At the first E-Learning Committee meeting of the year, on February 4, 2004, the committee decided to award 45 lecturers who have been classified as "Active E-Learning Instructors", in the period between 1999 to 2003. A small presentation ceremony to honor their efforts took place on March 18, 2004, at *Bilik Belian*. The event was graced by the presence of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), Professor Abdul Rashid Abdullah and Dean of the Centre of Applied Learning & Multimedia (CALM), Professor Peter Songan. All faculty deans, deputy deans and program heads were also present to witness the presentation of the E-Learning Merit award to all 45 lecturers at the event. Out of the 45, 31 lecturers were given a special privilege to work on brand-new desktops at their offices. It is hoped that the new hardware will motivate these lecturers further to be more involved in developing E-Learning strategies for the benefit of their courses, students and faculties.

On training the academics on how to use web-based technologies to enhance classroom instruction, CALM has co-organized a 2-day workshop with the Medical Education Unit at the Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences in Kuching. 18 lecturers came, attended and



■	Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
■	Faculty of Engineering
■	Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts
■	Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development
■	Faculty of Resource Science and Technology
■	Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology
■	Faculty of Economics and Business
■	Faculty of Social Sciences

completed the training, and they created 37 online course cubes to support the courses that they teach in the Medical and Nursing programmes offered at FHMS, within the two-day duration.



FROM CLICKS TO "CLINGS"

It is an understatement to assume that a website is merely a collage of digital representation of existing paper base content, and it is presumptuous to consider a website's success by measuring solely on the aesthetic value of design that is cool, hip or flashy. In all cases it is the **information** that drives the design of any website. It is this information that represents the organization within a virtual world which is both borderless and transparent. Such information is viewed by millions of net-citizens, who can both make or break an organization's reputation or drive its core business.

The Centre for Applied Learning and Multimedia (CALM) which was given custodianship of the Unimas website is continually striving to improve the university's website, both in design and in the quality of the information published. CALM sees Unimas as being in the business of education and that the location

of our university website at <http://www.unimas.my> seeks to turn clicks into "clings", that is "to turn a casual information seeker into a full-time student who chooses to accomplish his/her dreams for a good education at the university". This is the fundamental goal that underlies the current design and development of our Unimas website.

In March this year, we also witnessed the appointment of 10 persons on the Unimas Website Committee, which included representatives from all eight faculties at the university. The first meeting for the committee will be held soon, to standardize and streamline initiatives related directly to the development of the website. It is our hope that the committee will drive the push for the website to increase its readership and quality of content for years to come.

CAIS UPDATES

CAIS Homepage

Please visit CAIS Homepage at <http://www.unimas.my>. Just **CLICK** either on Centres or CAIS (Library).

BioMed Central

Unimas is currently an institutional member to BioMed Central.

BioMed Central is an independent online publishing house committed to providing immediate and free access to the peer-reviewed biological and medical research it publishes. BioMed Central Institutional Membership offers institutions an opportunity to actively support a new model of research communication.

Benefits of BioMed Central Membership

- All researchers and faculty within an institution are entitled to submit an unlimited number of research papers to any BioMed Central's journals without incurring the article processing charge each time.
- A 15% discount on all institutional subscriptions to any subscription product that BioMed Central

publishes, such as Faculty of 1000 Biology, Genome Biology and images MD.

- Each member institution has a customized member's page, featuring:
 - A list of titles of relevant articles generated at the institution and published in any of BioMed Central's journals
 - The institution's own logo and a link to homepage
 - Titles included in all relevant searches on BioMed Central
 - Linking of these titles to the full text of the article on BioMed Central

Link to BioMed Central

<http://www.biomedcentral.com/institution/48911>

For more information, please contact Puan Korina Ibrahim ext 163

CAIS Collection

We would like to request the co-operation of users in ensuring that books are placed either in their original location or on trolleys that are available. Lecturers are also requested to help promote the proper usage of library resources among our students.

Special Interest Group on Open Source Software

Open Source Software (OSS) refers to software in which the application source codes is made freely available. It is a cost effective alternative compared to using proprietary software. Source codes can be downloaded from the Internet and customised to suit specific needs. It is essential for developing countries such as Malaysia to exploit open source software to catalyse its software industry. The OSS development culture is required to harness the creative potential of our younger generation in shaping our Knowledge Society.

The Open Source Software Special Interest Group (OSS-SIG) has been established in Unimas comprising of members from various faculties and centres. The aim of this OSS-SIG is to become a forum on the adoption and use of OSS. This covers the OSS development as well as promoting the use of OSS for administration, teaching and research. The OSS-SIG would work closely with the state government and ICT companies to promote open Source in the state.

As an activity of the OSS-SIG, the first OSS101 Open Source Appreciation Seminar and Workshop was successfully organised. This workshop was held in the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology (FCSIT) organised by Unimas OSS-SIG together with Malaysia National Computer Confederation (MNCC) in collaboration with the ICT Unit, Chief Minister's department. The two-day seminar and

workshop was officially launched by the Deputy Chief Minister, Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr George Chan Hong Nam. The aim of the seminar and workshop was to create an awareness of the benefits of OSS and to promote its usage.

There were 70 participants for the seminar comprising of 30 participants from state government, 26 participants from Unimas and 14 from private sectors. As for the workshop, there were 27 participants with 15 participants from the Sarawak State Government, 5 participants from Unimas, and 7 participants from private sector.

The seminar demonstrated how OSS can be used on a daily basis to enrich personal computing experience and presented the know-how in building a business by relying on OSS. The hands-on training covering the popular Linux operating environment as well as office productivity applications was well appreciated.

Unimas OSS-SIG is planning to conduct training internally within Unimas for both staff and students. Unimas OSS-SIG will continue to explore collaborations with the state government and private agencies in promoting open source throughout the state. For more information, email dnfaiz@fit.unimas.my or ajohari@fit.unimas.my.

